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NSC BRIEFING

3 June 1954

DELTA MILITARY SITUATION

I. Rapid return Viet Minh battle corps
poses early threat delta.

A. Five divisions Dien Bien Phu
expected around delta this
week.

C. Could be ready for action
15 June.

II. Indications possible enemy intent.

A. Rapidity return Dien Bien
Phu, could mean plan for early
offensive.

DIA review(s)
completed.

State Dept. review completed

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B. Training 17 new battalions

Thai Nguyen believed for
purpose filling out battle
corps.

E. Recent Chinese aid included
six rocket launchers, number
recoilless rifles, 3,300
rounds 105mm artillery ammo.

III. Cogny told US attachés major attack
15-20 June "almost certain."

A. He pessimistic re Hanoi;
fears enemy will concen-
trate Hanoi-Haiphong and
he ~~won't~~ ^{CAN'T} prevent permanent
break.

B. If break occurs, he does
not "intend to have another
Dien Bien Phu;" will with-
draw to Haiphong.

1. Hanoi dependent daily coal supplies for electricity and water purification; already reported low in rice supplies due Viet Minh harassment.

IV.. General impression our service attachés is that delta, except Haiphong bridge-head, can't last 30 days under heavy attack.

V. Assistant army attaché Hanoi says full attack would not bring disintegration French regular forces, though morale poor.

VI. Army attaché Saigon sees piecemeal employment enemy battle corps in delta, rather than full-scale attack.

- A. Enemy could avoid head-on collision heavier armed French forces and exposure air attack.

VII. French planning build-up, reorganization delta defenses; will try hold delta.

- A. Army attaché Saigon says total delta infantry soon to be 117 battalions.
- B. Plan is quick increase mobile forces by as many as 15 battalions (to total 36).
- C. 10 to 13 coming from Laos.
- D. Abandonment small, static posts will provide more mobile forces.

E. French also plan concentrate mobile strength in north delta; southern area to be held by Vietnamese.

1. Initially, mobile units will support Vietnamese.

F. American chargé reports that Governor Tri of Tonkin and key Catholic Bishop of Buichu reflect a "mounting sense of panic and a feeling that the last act is about to open."

VIII. Laos, to be stripped of 10 to 13 battalions for reinforcing delta, faces possible rapid deterioration of security situation.

A. Viet Minh regular strength in Laos, although only 10 battalions, expected to take advantage of French exodus and increase harassment of local forces. There also 8,000 irregulars.

B. Weak Laotian army totals 13 battalions. Also 2,500 auxiliaries.

IX. Meanwhile, reports political coup drew blank looks French, Laotian officials.

A. But Lao officials known be suspicious Prince Petsarath; been watching his activities.

B. American Legation Vientiane feels Petsarath may intend seizing throne rather than premiership.